

Tourism Workforce Assessment Forum
Sedona
June 2, 2005

Discussion Topic 1: Recruitment, Retention & Succession

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?

- I wish I had a strategy; it's a lot of luck. Entry-level is just luck. We can advertise for weeks and never get a response. We hope for new people to move in and that they need a job and get a quality person, there's a labor shortage and there has been for several years
- Something we've found is we reward current employees for referrals, family members, the higher the referral money, the more response, right now we offer \$200—if that person gets hired and at 90 days
- I have a clarification question—there are two levels of entry-level. A Sedona school just qualified for funding [because they have over] 40% Hispanics in the school. We have lots of entry-level that are Hispanic, and other entry-level that have the language skills. The first group is going to be impacted in our field—the spiritual field. And they come and they are used to making lots of money and here they can't do it. And they don't know how to fill in
- We have started working with the Voc-Ed program at the local high school, they come and tour our facility. This is for kids who don't know if they want to go to college yet. These kids that don't know what to do and we could mold them

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit management employees?

- We go to our trade associations and post our jobs and their websites, so we use these industry assn's to recruit
- We try to promote from within so they are groomed from within and so they know they are on a track. The majority of these positions are filled from within but the high positions, we have to go out
- Sedona's place in the media, people recognize Sedona...its reputation is a self-recruiting and McCain is helping—politicians do make a difference
- Our stores, no matter what we pay, we have to up it. Lots of management people don't have background to run retail. They need to have some experience, it's hard because we can't pay them enough. We have to give them that extra pay to get them in. we need to offer more incentives
- Our company, we've maintained the management employees, the way we do our work is nontraditional. I telecommute. Our creative person works from home and she can do other consulting work. We allow flexibility and that freedom

Besides wages, what factors contribute to employee turnover?

- Cost of living, affordable housing has gotten out of control over the last year
- I met a concierge that had 3 jobs to pay for the house she was renting
- Renting is affordable here but buying is the problem. We've found that couples that come in and only one of them does well and their spouse can't find
- We're losing lots of workers due to age
- Our workforce is older people—they are semi-retired, our older workforce stays and they are more dependable
- Some of them want increase hikes and build a big career and that is not here. There's a lack of opportunity
- Health insurance and benefits are not there like they used to be
- We've increased our hours and have more trains. People want to work less than full-time
- This is an area where people are interested in the outdoors, so they'll take a retail job until they can get something that's outdoors
- There's a huge seasonal factor

What are you doing/could you do to attract young people to consider a career in the tourism industry?

- I worked with the high school, and tourism is phenomenally under taught, they don't have the view that they are providing an important job and tax base. Tourism is only going to get bigger
- High school level classes, they offer shop and such, but nothing in tourism
- NAU has a great tourism program, that's a great resource for us
- And their marketing program
- We aren't doing anything to let kids know that this can be a career
- Local high school got a grant to do a criminal justice class and kids were excited to do something different
- Places could offer internships, and brief them on careers in tourism. Kids don't see the relevance. We need to get the lodging council to go out and offer internships. They could offer scholarships to students majoring in tourism

- Enchantment, just recently started working with local high school to start an internship program. There's DECA, a hospitality program and it's an annual conference. We need to find a way to get local kids interested in what we do
- In flagstaff, there were so many smart young people, there's a labor force that we can't tap very well
- I've run ads in flagstaff, and no answer

How are you preparing employees for advancement in your organization?

- That's another problem with this area because of the number of small business.
- We've got succession planning that starts from orientation to show them the ladder, all levels, we show them the track and watch them and its only limited by what they want to do. We've got 500 employees, so there are lots of opportunities if they want it. If they are good at what they do, then that's what matters
- There are a lot of small businesses, there's little opportunity to offer them advancement
- Ours is different is that people on our tracks and trains to get training and certifying. Lots of people go become engineers for major railroads
- Arizona being 49th in pay for teachers is not a good thing. it is not seen as a great career. Even teachers' benefits are ridiculously high, that's a major workforce that's missing

Are there jobs that a guest worker are well suited?

- We hire probably close to 30 under a j-1 visa program and we place them into entry-level position, the spa, room attendants, etc, we have to provide housing for them and that's tough in this area. We have 5 apartments that we lease year long, so for part of the year they sit empty. And the hb2 visa program. And then there are those that are legal and we think they are legal. Will there be problems later with those that are illegal to be made legal. We have way more jobs than employees to fill
- We've got to get affordable housing built; we could do something between Sedona and cottonwood. Where do they go?
- We need to look at logistics of guest workers
- Some of our skilled positions management and such, we can once we prove we've sought a person, go abroad with hb2
- I couldn't use a guest worker at any level because our business requires training with the reservation. The training and the time limit will cause the problems, so its not worth it for us
- We need people who are sharp and can work with a variety of people

Discussion Topic 2: Industry Trends

How do changing travel preferences affect your workforce and training needs?

- That's huge...they are so much more educated and what we say about the travel restaurants, etc. they expect that. There's less figuring it out when they get here.
- They are much more savvy and prepared, less surprise
- People come out here and want to do something different. We have to give them roads; we've got lots of people coming here with cars. We're getting a trolley and that should help. It's dealing with the cars the infrastructure
- We have found –we do a dinner theater thing- we had fewer families, they were more families, and now we've got more families and that is a big change. It's like Vegas, it was just couples and they went to families ...we're starting to address that and we have found that trend growing. We try to look at more activities and provide them with the activities and keep them here a day or two longer
- The level of activity, there's more money, they want something more unusual and they will pay for it
- People want helicopters, jeeps, special events and people are willing to pay for it
- And educational programs so that everyone learns a little something. Now affordability is there too We really look for more professional people/guides.
- I agree that a segment of travelers that are willing to pay for that, but I think people are more savvy and looking for the best deal and buy packages and all-inclusive and yet they still want that high level of service

What other social trends...

- More and more people are coming here for a spiritual experience; half of our questions at the chamber is about spiritual. Our industry that needs to have people who know about this
- Speaks to the variety of travel we are getting, families, spiritual
- And we can't judge the people, being over 60 doesn't mean anything. People's desires are changing, 60 is middle age
- The curiosity factor is great. We have to give them enough

- Sedona is being discovered worldwide, esp. the spiritual area, we are getting a lot of Japanese
- We've translated our handouts to Japanese, thanks to the chamber
- People who speak other languages get more pay

What new jobs or job skills are emerging in your company or industry?

- We've had lots of foreigners coming in. we've had employees who speak other languages, so this isn't new
- We've noticed that we need people with food experience and with more skills in general
- As far as marketing, the emphasis on the internet and that the info is accurate on the web, so having someone that your presence is there
- You're going to see the package option as part of the skills needs. Massage therapists, spiritual understanding, spa, the outdoor as part of the whole package
- Our spa was opened in 2001 and it has driven with us, more and more people are coming for that experience
- I would underline the computer and internet part of it
- There are lots of dabblers of computers in this area, but there's a need for knowing internet and computers really well
- In house publishing, this is key for all of us now, we didn't think about that before
- 99% of our stores use cash registers, hardly have any computers. We're starting it at our new stores, so we've had to train people on these systems. Eventually we'll have all our stores so we need to train people for this
- Local students is that all students are on MACs and businesses are on pc

Over the next five years, what jobs and job skills areas are being phased out from your company or industry?

- We're phasing out reservationists; we want people to utilize our system online. We have our guides on the open air cars, but everything is automated.
- We've found the opposite, that people want more personal touch
- People can tune out an automatic narration and feel rude not doing that
- We're eliminating some the positions, cause things are working more efficiently—inventory people or use that person to do other things. There's still not enough to do and we get lots of people in
- As computers go into hotel rooms, so concierges are going to be minimal
- We've got art walks, is that known, do businesses know of community events
- People are printing things and having things ready
- I think people are doing things before they get here, but when they are here they want to talk to people
- Our reservation folks are becoming concierges

Aging of workforce?

- Best employees
- The negative issue is insurance, it's expensive to cover
- People when they are older have to be careful to make too much money otherwise they pay it back in taxes
- We're such an unusual market. Lots of retirees here and they don't have to work, they just want to stay active
- They are great mentors; they care about their presence and mood
- They bring a sense of calm to younger workers
- They watch younger workers to make sure everyone is doing their job
- Young people will listen to them as opposed to parents
- Older workers are the leaders even above the manager, because they are peers. We have to do classes on that—diversity and such
- Rarely that an older worker has problem with younger managers—it's like telling mom what to do

What intergenerational issues affect your workforce?

- Frequently, the older workforce is more conservative or close-minded about "different" things. There's an issue with older workers dealing with visitors who are looking for that spiritual experience
- We've got an 85 year old who she doesn't understand young people. There's a different motive. There's less dedication to the customer.
- I see that, it's courtesy...address intergenerational issues through further training, staying with them
- Role modeling is huge and younger people aren't as outgoing, so they can learn by watching older people
- If you give older people the responsibility to be a mentor to younger people
- Older people need the younger people, communication and they gossip together, there's vicarious living, but there's a language barrier. "When they say, I need to go get my drugs, it means something totally different"

Discussion Topic 3: Staff Development & Training

What are you currently doing to train and update the skills of your employees?

- Apparently nothing!
- We start them off with an orientation and rarely do OTJ training; people who do that don't stay, so we've stopped that. 80% of what we do from first day of employment and we identify employees as trainers, and have them train for other jobs in the resort so they get a broad picture. We do get external trainers to do motivational talks about hospitality and such. Most of it is internal
- I encourage all resorts to be part of concierge to train their employees, that's better for community in general
- From my feeling, with our smaller businesses, training has to come from owner or director. At the chamber, char is great about getting us trained. Unfortunately there's so much focus on the bottom line and they won't put the money up to train those employees
- A lot of small business owners don't know how to train employees
- Two types of training, skill training (computers/jobs/cross-training). We use everything the industry offers us. What we miss using are the people who are in the clubs that love history and other such clubs, there's so many little clubs that come and teach about their passions

What educational partnerships does your organization currently have, and how could these be improved?

- VocEd, there's another program that you can get money for in journalism and photography, criminal justice, if we could work with them to do a tourism class, we could get money. Lots of early graduations, so these classes would be a great opportunity through electives
- I've talked to kids who went on to study criminal justice because of this
- Bringing in clubs, forest service allows us to do some special and we can provide training for professional training and areas.
- Ecotourism is becoming huge and we need to help businesses evolve to this
- YC and NAU have programs, Yavapai is not as developed. NAU is huge
- I always had eager people from NAU who learned so much. Yavapai hasn't gotten much
- NAU has outlets here to continue your degree. You'd think that their hospitality program would be expanded here to this area.

What needs do you or your customers have that you are unable to meet because your employees don't have the necessary skills?

- General customer service (YA!!). People don't take the time to do things; maybe they aren't given the authority to resolve issues
- We try to preach empowerment; we try to let them know we'll support them within reason
- It is critical to the people training to let people know that they should try to solve the problem
- We started doing secret shoppers and it impacted their raises.
- We've done that, and you learn so much from it. It's about finding out where they can improve and what we are doing for our people
- We want to be efficient and we'd be happy to have people go out and train people on the spiritual
- Unfamiliarity with this

What can be done to help prepare younger members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?

- We use lots of high school students especially those in sports and activities, I try to hire them to be able to do other activities and they are willing to come back to work so I try to be flexible with that
- Some coaches tell the kids, you better not have a job or it better not get in the way. So there's a lot of pressure.
- It helps kids be better kids
- Kids need simple guidelines for doing their jobs. You can't assume that they know.
- They need training to think ahead and plan and communicate
- I don't know if this is trainable—if there's some way to give them passion about what they do
- Passion comes with experience
- It's important that we give them the vested interest to make it a better experience for them so they give that same great experience for employees
- We offer a bonus and if they have a buy-in to that, then it works.
- That's true, I'm always amazed that people come in and don't know anything about your company. It's a work ethic thing that comes from families and such
- Paying employees for extra time they put in at the end of the period

Aging in place employees

- People need information on night-life activities. Understanding that scene, which doesn't really exist in Sedona
- Computers are so important. It's training and sensitizing them to computers, less of an intimidating experience
- If it's physical work, we've made accommodations, like have someone else do that work
- Stools, the standing is too much for them (chairs make things too casual)
- Have to make concessions
- I let employees leave before it gets dark so they don't have to drive home in the dark
- Small print stuff is always a problem
- Younger people come in and challenge older workers to do things they didn't do before

How will technology affect your staff training and development?

- One of the things the chamber could offer through the Internet on the chamber Web site and do simple tests to read history of Sedona and details and take a short test or something. The training could be there, so the cost would be minimal. And this would set a standard of knowledge
- It's easier to do things online because things are in English and Spanish when it's related to technical skill sets, but customer service, diversity, etc, is better delivered in person
- We don't do training, but our guides are more interested to go online and get info for their tours than go to library to get information
- Newsletter to follow the trade and sending the info out, electronic data could be great for training
- People who have a positive experience, I share that with my staff and go to immediate discussing and resolving and decide tactics to solve these issues